Application No. 10/789,156   Customer No. 01933
Response to Office Action

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Independent claims 22, 23, 40, 41, 43 and 44 have been amended to clarify that the (first) identification unit identifies the area of the input image based on image data obtained from the area of the input image and an identification reference value, and that the identification reference value is set via an operation setting unit, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 19, lines 3-15, and, for example, Figs. 2 and 3. (See also now canceled claims 29 and 30.)

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 22, 23, 40, 41, 43 and 44 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 22-44 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 5,199,081 (previously cited "Saito et al"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

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As recognized by the Examiner, Saito et al discloses

identifying a format of the application form 100 using the image

reader 104. Specifically, according to Saito et al, the

application form 100 includes marks 207 and/or marks 208 which

identify the format of the application form, and marks 205

and 206 which enable the locations of frames in the application

form to be detected.   In Saito et al, a format identifying

device in the image reader 104 determines the format of the

application form 100 based on the marks.

By contrast, it is respectfully pointed out that according

to the present invention as recited in amended independent

claims 22, 23, 40, 41, 43 and 44, the area of the input image is

identified based on image data obtained from the area of the

input image and an identification reference value.

That is, according to the claimed present invention, _image_

data from the area of the input image to be identified is used,

together with _a reference value_, to identify the area as being

one of a character area, a photographic area, and a screened

halftone area and/or one of a chromatic character area and an

achromatic character area. A single color is then outputted for

each identified area on the basis of an identification result.

And an operation setting unit is provided so that the

identification reference value can be corrected or adjusted if

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it is determined that the area identification has been performed

inappropriately.

With this structure, it is possible to check the area

identification process to ensure that it is performed

appropriately, despite differences in scanner characteristics

among individual copying machines, in order to solve the problems

in area identification which are clearly explained on page 4,

line 15 to page 5, line 26 of the specification.

By contrast, according to Saito et al, predetermined marks

(printed areas or notches) on a form are identified, the type of

the form 100 is determined based on the presence and absence of

the marks 207 and/or 208, and the locations of the frames in the

form 100 are determined based on the marks 205 and 206. Thus,

according to Saito et al, the image data from an area on the form

clearly is not used to determine the type of the area. Instead,

Saito et al discloses using marks sections of the form not

corresponding to areas 201-203 to determine the format of the

form and the locations of areas.

The Examiner has cited column 9, lines 37+ and column 11,

lines 8+ of Saito et al as disclosing a reference value and an

operation setting unit. It is respectfully submitted, however,

that the marks 205 and 206 identified in the cited sections are

merely printed on the form 100 as shown in Fig. 2. And it is

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respectfully submitted that the marks 205 and 206 are clearly not used as reference values, together with image data of the area, to identify the area of an input image. It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that Saito et al does not disclose, teach or suggest that the marks 205 and 206 are set via an operation setting unit.

The Examiner has also cited column 3, lines 45+ of Saito et al as disclosing identifying an area of an input image. It is respectfully pointed out, however, that the character recognition unit 105 at column 3, lines 45+ of Saito et al clearly is a unit for recognizing characters (that is, text), and not a unit to identify <u>an area</u> of a form.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 22, 23, 40, 41, 43 and 44, and claims 24-28, 31-39 and 42 respectively depending therefrom, all clearly patentably distinguish over Saito et al, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

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     If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or

recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the

undersigned for prompt action.

                       Respectfully submitted,

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